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By Ricki Barker
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ALBANY — U.S. Rep. Sanford Bishop, D-Albany, told Dougherty County Rotary Club members Thursday afternoon that there is evidence that economic recovery is slowly moving forward.

“We welcome the beginning of the return for economic growth,” he said. “We are now starting to see a glimmer of light at the end of the tunnel.”

Wednesday marked the one-year anniversary of the federal economic stimulus law, the \$787 billion American Economic Recovery and Investment Act that, Bishop said, is assisting with the nation’s economic recovery.

“The evidence is clear that the recovery act is working to restore economic growth,” he said. “I think, personally, that it has gone a long way to getting our citizens back to work.”

According to the congressman, the stimulus bill brought \$4.8 billion to Georgia and \$291.8 million to the Second District of Georgia, which Bishop represents.

According to Recovery.gov, the U.S. government’s official Web site designed to provide data on the Recovery Act spending, Georgia has received approximately \$2 billion of the \$4.8 billion between Feb. 17-Dec. 31, 2009.

Bishop said the stimulus bill was designed to distribute money gradually.

“It was written and designed to be like a time release capsule for recovery,” he said. “The object is to have every element and every area of our country served. This year, we should have an even larger infusion of money to the area.”

Bishop said economists across partisan lines have agreed the stimulus bill has helped the economy greatly.

“The stimulus bill has pulled us back from the brink of economic disaster,” he said Thursday.

Bishop said now that the economy is in the process of recovery he and his fellow Blue Dog Democrats are hoping to reinstate the Pay-As-You-Go or Pay-Go bill that would require any expenses that Congress approves to be offset by equal or greater gains in surplus elsewhere.

“It is time to step back and find a way back to fiscal responsibility,” he said. “Almost 50 percent

of our nation's debt is owned by China, Japan and the OPEC countries. This legislation (Pay-Go) eliminates improper payments and wasteful spending."

Bishop said that bill worked well during the '90s when the government enjoyed a surplus.

"We need a balanced budget amendment by 2020," he said.

Bishop said he has made some difficult decisions this year regarding hot-button issues such as health care and the Cap and Trade bill.

"Cap and Trade turned out to be one of the hardest and most controversial votes I have made," he said.

Bishop said the importance of relinquishing our nation's dependence on foreign energy sources is imperative. He also said that he "fought desperately" to try and work out a compromise that would not harm the mostly agrarian district he represents.

Bishop also voted in favor of the Affordable Healthcare for America Act, a choice he said he made after listening to his constituents who were both for and against the bill.

"I know that people had a lot of concerns," he said. "We (Congress) were able to push that off until we heard from the people. I was convinced that we could not afford to do nothing and that all us believe that every American should have affordable, accessible health care."